

The Ideal Muslimah

The True Islamic Personality of the Muslim Woman as Defined in the Qur'an and Sunnah

شخصية المرأة المسلمة

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satisfaction that Dr. Hashimi's sincere effort has attracted a large readership in all the languages into which it has been translated so far.

This is the third revised edition, produced in line with the 4th Arabic edition of this book, with a new layout. Every effort has been made to correct printing or other discrepancies that had crept into previous editions.

May Allah, the Exalted, bless with acceptance the sincere efforts of the author, translator and all those associated with the publication of this work.

Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Muhsin Al Tuwaijri

General Manager

International Islamic Publishing House,
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Translator's Foreword

Praise be to Allah (ﷻ), Lord of the Worlds, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his family and the Companions.

The Ideal Muslimah: the true Islamic personality of the Muslim woman as defined by the Qur'an and Sunnah offers the reader a comprehensive overview of the woman's place in the Islamic scheme of things. The many roles which a woman may play throughout her life — daughter, wife, mother, friend — are explored in detail. Extensive quotations from Hadith and historical accounts of the lives of the early Muslim women provide a vivid picture of how the Muslim woman at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) went about putting Islam into practice; this is an example which Muslim women of all places and eras may follow in their own lives.

An important point is the fact that the first chapter addressed the Muslim woman's relationship with Allah (ﷻ). Dr. Muhammad 'Ali al-Hashimi rightly puts first things first, and reminds readers that they must pay attention to this most important aspect of our lives. If our *'aqeedah* (belief) and worship is sound and sincere, then other things will begin to fall into place, *in-shā' Allah* (If Allah wills).

From there, the author takes us by stages from a woman's care of her own self — body, mind and soul — to her relationships and dealings with her family, friends, neighbours and society as a whole. Far from being the passive, oppressed victim of popular stereotype, the Muslim woman is seen to be a whole person with a valid contribution to make at every level of community life.

This is, above all, an immensely practical book. Dr. Al-Hashimi addresses real issues that face Muslim women throughout the world, and supports every point made with extensive quotations

CHAPTER ONE

The Muslim Woman and Her Lord

The believing woman is alert

One of the most prominent distinguishing features of the Muslim woman is her deep faith in Allah (ﷻ) (the Exalted) and her sincere conviction that whatever happens in this universe, and whatever fate befalls human beings, only happens through the will and decree of Allah; whatever befalls a person could not have been avoided, and whatever does not happen to a person could not have been made to happen. A person has no choice in this life but to strive towards the right path and to do good deeds — acts of worship and other acts — by whatever means one can, putting all his trust in Allah (ﷻ), submitting to His will, and believing that he is always in need of Allah's help and support.

The story of Haajar (Prophet Ibraheem's wife) offers the Muslim woman the most marvellous example of deep faith in Allah and sincere trust in Him. The Prophet Ibraheem (Abraham) (ﷺ) (may peace be upon him) left her at the Ka'bah in Makkah, above the well of *Zamzam*, at a time when there were no people and no water in the place. Haajar had no one with her except her infant son Isma'eel (Ishmael). She asked Ibraheem, calmly and with no trace of panic: "Has Allah commanded you to do this, O' Ibraheem?" Prophet Ibraheem (ﷺ) said, "Yes." Her response reflected her acceptance and optimism: "Then He is not going to abandon us." Reported by Bukhari in *Kitaab al-Anbiya*.¹

¹ *Baab Yaziffoon*. See Ibn Haajar, *Fath al-Baari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhari*, published by Daar al-Ma'rifah, vol. 6, p. 396.

Here was an extremely difficult situation: a man left his wife and infant son in a barren land, where there were no plants, no water, and no people, and went back to the distant land of Palestine. He left nothing with her but a sack of dates and a skin filled with water. Were it not for the deep faith and trust in Allah that filled Haajar's heart, she would not have been able to cope with such a difficult situation; she would have collapsed straight away, and would not have become the woman whose name is forever remembered day and night by those who perform Hajj and 'Umrah at the house of Allah, every time they drink the pure water of Zamzam, and run between the mounts of Safa and Marwah, as Haajar did on that most tiring day.

This deep faith and awareness had an amazing effect on the lives of Muslim men and women: it awoke their conscience and reminded them that Allah (ﷻ) witnesses and knows every secret, and that He is with a person wherever he may be. Nothing gives a clearer idea of that consciousness and fear of Allah at all times than the story of the young Muslim girl related in *Şifat aş-Şafwah* and *Wafiyat al-A'yaan*, and cited by Ibn al-Jawzi in *Aḥkaam an-Nisaa'* (pp. 441, 442):

"Narrated 'Abdullah ibn Zayd ibn Aslam, from his father, from his grandfather, who said: 'When I was accompanying 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab (رضي الله عنه) (may Allah be pleased with him) on his patrol of Madeenah at night, he felt tired, so he leant against a wall. It was the middle of the night, and (we heard) a woman say to her daughter, 'O' my daughter, get up and mix that milk with some water.' The girl said, 'O' Mother, did you not hear the decree of *Ameer al-Mu'mineen* (chief of the believers — the caliph) today?' The mother said, 'What was that?' The girl said, 'He ordered someone to announce in a loud voice that milk should not be mixed with water.' The mother said, 'Get up and mix the milk with water; you are in a place where 'Umar cannot see you.' The girl told her mother, 'I cannot obey him in public and disobey him in private.' 'Umar heard this, and told me: 'O' Aslam, go to that place and see who that girl is, and to whom she

was speaking, and whether she has a husband.' So I went to that place, and I saw that she was unmarried, the other woman was her mother, and neither of them had a husband. I came to 'Umar and told him what I had found out. He called his sons together, and said to them: 'Do any of you need a wife, so I can arrange the marriage for you? If I had the desire to get married, I would have been the first one to marry this young woman.' 'Abdullah said: 'I have a wife.' 'Abdur-Rahmaan said: 'I have a wife.' 'Aṣim said: 'I do not have a wife, so let me marry her.' So 'Umar arranged for her to be married to 'Aṣim. She gave him a daughter, who grew up to be the mother of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Aziz.'"

This is the deep sense of awareness that Islam had implanted in the heart of this young woman. She was righteous and upright in all her deeds, both in public and in private, because she believed that Allah (ﷻ) was with her at all times and saw and heard everything. This is true faith, and these are the effects of that faith, which raised her to the level of *iḥsaan* (excellence). One of the immediate rewards with which Allah honoured her was this blessed marriage, one of whose descendants was the fifth rightly-guided *khaleefah*, 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Aziz (رضي الله عنه).

The *'Aqeedah* (faith) of the true Muslim woman is pure and clear, uncontaminated by any stain of ignorance, illusion or superstition. This *'Aqeedah* is based on faith in Allah, the One, the Most High, the Eternal, Who is able to do all things, Who is in control of the entire universe, and to Whom all things must return:

"Say: 'Who is it in Whose hands is the governance of all things — Who protects [all], but is not protected [by any]? [Say] if you know.' They will say, '[It belongs] to Allah,' Say: 'Then how are you deluded?'"

(*Qur'an* 23: 88-89)

most beloved by Allah?' He said,

'To offer each prayer as soon as it is due.' I asked him, 'Then what?' He said, 'Treating one's parents with mercy and respect.' I asked him, 'Then what?' He said, 'Jihad (struggling / fighting) for the sake of Allah.'"³

Prayer is the link between the slave and his Lord. It is the rich source from which a person derives strength, steadfastness, mercy and contentment, and it is a means of cleansing the stain of his or her sins. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), the Companion of the Prophet narrated: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say:

'What would you think if there were a river running by the door of any of you, and he bathed in it five times every day, would any trace of dirt be left on him?' The people said: 'There would be no trace of dirt on him.' He said: 'This is like the five daily prayers, through which Allah erases sins.'"⁴

Jaabir (رضي الله عنه), an another Companion, said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

'The five daily prayers are like a deep river flowing by the door of any of you, in which he bathes five times every day.'"⁵

Prayer is a mercy, which Allah (ﷻ) has bestowed upon His slaves; they seek its shade five times a day and praise their Lord, glorifying Him, asking for His help and seeking His mercy, guidance and

³ Imam al-Baghawi, *Sharh as-Sunnah*, 2/176 (*Kitaab as-Shalaah, baab faḍl as-shalawaat al-khams*); published by Al-Maktab al-Islami.

⁴ *Sharh as-Sunnah*, 2/175, *Kitaab as-Shalaah, baab faḍl as-shalawaat al-khams*.

⁵ *Shaheeh Muslim bi Sharh an-Nawawi, Kitaab al-Masaajid, baab faḍl as-shalaah al-maktoobah fi jama'ah*, 5/170, published by the Head Office of Academic Research, Ifta and Da'wah, Saudi Arabia.

forgiveness. Thus prayer becomes a means of purification for those who pray, men and women alike, cleansing them from their sins.

'Uthmaan ibn 'Affaan (رضي الله عنه) said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say:

'There is no Muslim person who, when the time for prayer comes, performs *wuḍoo'* properly, concentrates on his prayer and bows correctly, but the prayer will be an expiation for the sins committed prior to it, so long as no major sin has been committed. This is the case until the end of time.'"⁶

There are very many Hadiths which speak of the importance of *ṣalaah* and the blessings it brings to the men and women who pray, and the rich harvest of benefits that they may reap thereby, every time they stand before Allah in an attitude of humility and repentance.

She may attend the Jama'ah (Congregational prayer) in the Mosque

Islam has excused women from the obligation to attend the *jama'ah* prayer in the mosque, but at the same time, they are permitted to go out of the house to attend *jama'ah* on condition that they dress up well enough not to cause any temptation. Indeed, the first Muslim women did go out and pray in the mosque behind the Prophet (ﷺ).

'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها) (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

"The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to pray *fajr*, and the believing women would pray with him, wrapped up in their outer garments; then they would go back to their homes, and nobody would recognize them.""⁷

⁶ Muslim, 3/112, *Kitaab at-Tahaarah, baab faḍl al-wuḍoo' wa-shalaah 'aqaabahu*.

⁷ *Fath al-Baari*, 1/482, *baab fi kam tuṣalli al-mar'ah fith-thiyab*.

This is the pure, deep faith which increases the character of the Muslim woman in strength, understanding and maturity, so that she sees life as it really is, which is a place of testing whose results will be seen on the Day which will undoubtedly come:

"Say: 'It is Allah Who gives you life, then gives you death; then He will gather you together for the Day of Judgement about which there is no doubt': but most men do not understand." (Qur'an 45: 26)

"Did you then think that We had created you in jest, and that you would not be brought back to Us [for account]?" (Qur'an 23: 115)

"Blessed is He in Whose hands is Dominion; and He over all things has Power — He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed; and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving." (Qur'an 67: 1-2)

On that Day, man will be brought to account for his deeds. If they are good, it will be good for him, and if they are bad, it will be bad for him. There will not be the slightest injustice:

"That Day will every soul be requited for what it earned; no injustice will there be that Day, for Allah is Swift in taking account." (Qur'an 40: 17)

The Balance (in which man's deeds will be weighed) will measure everything with the utmost precision, either in a person's favour or against him:

"Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it." (Qur'an 99: 7-8)

Nothing could be hidden from the Lord of Glory on that Day, not even if it were as insignificant as a grain of mustard seed:

"We shall set up scales of justice for the day of Judgement, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. And if there be [no more than] the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it [to account]: and enough are We to take account." (Qur'an 21: 47)

No doubt that the true Muslim woman, when she ponders the meaning of these verses, would think about that crucial Day and would turn to her Lord (Allah) in obedience, repentance and gratitude, seeking to do as many righteous deeds as she is able, in preparation for the Hereafter.

She worships Allah (ﷻ)

It is no surprise that the true Muslim woman enthusiastically worships her Lord, because she knows that she is obliged to observe all the commandments that Allah (ﷻ) has enjoined upon every Muslim, male or female. So she carries out her Islamic duties properly, without making excuses or compromises, or being negligent.

She regularly prays five times a day

She offers each of the five daily prayers at its appointed time, and does not let domestic chores or her duties as a wife and mother prevent her from doing so. Prayer is the pillar of the religion — whoever establishes prayer establishes faith, and whoever neglects prayer destroys the faith.² Prayer is the best and most noble of deeds, as the Prophet (ﷺ) explained in the hadith narrated by 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه): "I asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): 'What deed is

² Ghazaali: *Ihya' 'Uloom ad-Deen*, 1/147.

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Publisher's Note

All praise and thanks belong to Allah (ﷻ) 'the Exalted', the Lord of the universe. May the choicest blessings and peace of Allah be upon the last of the messengers and prophets, Muhammad, his family, Companions and all those who follow his footsteps till the end of this universe.

Faith is not the matter of claims or wishful thinking; rather it is both belief and the practical application of that belief in daily life. It is impossible for a Muslim woman to lead a happy and contented life without the pristine faith and its correct application in her day-to-day life.

Woman plays an essential role in the formation of society. The saying goes that a woman is the first school for her children. If she is able to bring them up aright, then the nation will emerge prosperous and contented.

IIPH was eager to produce a book dealing with the characteristics which a Muslim woman should adopt and follow in order to become a true role model and example to be emulated in both Muslim and non-Muslim societies. Through her behaviour and conduct, she should strive to correct the erroneous — or, rather, malicious — stereotypes of Muslim women propagated by the media on the basis of the un-Islamic practices of a few. Thus, we will become able to revive the great, enlightened era of the Muslim woman through the rejuvenation of the Muslim society by propagating the true teachings of Islam.

With this idea in mind, IIPH selected this book by Dr. Hashimi to be rendered into a number of languages. It is a matter of great